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Actor Yefremov to Join Pro-Kremlin Director Mikhalkov's Theater Troupe After Parole Release

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Mikhail Yefremov. **Anastasia Romanova / Paragraph / TASS**

Russian actor Mikhail Yefremov will join the theater troupe of pro-Kremlin filmmaker Nikita Mikhalkov following his early release from prison on parole, Mikhalkov confirmed Friday.

Yefremov, 61, was convicted in 2020 of killing a delivery driver in a head-on collision while driving intoxicated in central Moscow. He was sentenced to eight years in a medium-security prison, later reduced to seven and a half on appeal.

A court granted the actor parole in March, and he was released in early April.

"Yes, he's recovering and we have a contract," Mikhalkov told the state-run TASS news agency. "I truly hope he will join the theater team because he remains a remarkable actor despite everything."

Related article: Jailed Russian Actor Mikhail Yefremov to Be Released on Parole

On Thursday, the exiled broadcaster TV Rain, citing an anonymous source close to Yefremov, reported that Mikhalkov had helped facilitate the actor's parole under the condition that he secure formal employment. According to the report, Yefremov is required to appear in at least two plays as part of the terms.

Mikhalkov did not specify when Yefremov would return to the stage but said he is expected to star in a theatrical adaptation of one of his films.

Yefremov, long known for playing charismatic, often inebriated characters, was a prominent figure in Russian theater and film for decades before his conviction.

Mikhalkov, 79, is an outspoken conservative and Orthodox Christian who frequently defends the Kremlin and criticizes the West on his state TV show. He won an Academy Award in 1995 for Best Foreign Language Film for "Burnt by the Sun."

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